

# MINUTES

OF THE

## GENERAL SYNOD

OF THE

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH;

SESSION EIGHTEENTH,

MET IN THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH,

October, 1836.

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WITH AN APPENDIX, CONTAINING

### TWO OVERTURES:

- I. "Argument on the Arminian Controversy."
- II. "Compend of Ecclesiastical Government and Order."

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ALBANY:

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## MINUTES, &c.

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*Pittsburgh, 5th Oct. 1836.*

Synod met agreeably to adjournment, at 7 o'clock P. M. The moderator being absent, Rev. Dr. Wilson, at the request of Mr. Blackwood, the moderator's alternate, opened the meeting with a Sermon from Col. iv. 17. "Say to Archippus, take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it."

After Sermon, the court was constituted with prayer. Adjourned by prayer, to meet to-morrow at 10 o'clock A. M. in the Reformed Presbyterian church, Alleghenytown.

*Alleghenytown, 6th Oct. 10 o'clock, A. M.*

The court met and was constituted with prayer by Mr. Blackwood, the moderator's alternate. The members of Synod were ascertained, when it appeared there were present from the

### OHIO PRESBYTERY,

#### *Ministers.*

REV. ROBERT WALLACE,  
" ROBERT LUSK,  
" JAMES FARIS,  
" DAVID STEELE,  
" JOHN WALLACE,  
" JOHN B. JOHNSTON.

#### *Ruling Elders.*

MR. JAMES FARIS,  
" DAVID WALLACE,  
" MATTHEW MITCHELL.

### PITTSBURGH PRESBYTERY.

" JAMES BLACKWOOD,	" JOHN DODDS,
" THOMAS SPROUL,	" THOMAS GEMMIL,
" HUGH WALKINSHAW,	" JAMES KIRK.
" JOHN CROZIER.	" SAMUEL ROGERS.

### SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY.

" JAMES R. WILLSON, D. D.	" ANDREW BOWDEN,
" WILLIAM L. ROBERTS,	" SAMUEL WRIGHT.
" DAVID SCOTT,	
" JAMES M. WILLSON,	
" MOSES RONEY.	

### NORTHERN PRESBYTERY.

" SAMUEL M. WILLSON,  
" JAMES MILLIGAN.



The Rev. Samuel M. Willson was chosen Moderator ; David Scott, Clerk, and Hugh Walkingshaw, Assistant Clerk.

Rev. William Sloane was invited to a seat as a consultative member, and took his seat accordingly. Minutes of last session of synod were read and approved.

On motion, the 5th standing rule of synod was suspended that papers might be received. The following were received. No. 1. A letter from the Scottish synod. No. 2. Papers from Vermont respecting Anti-slavery Societies. No. 3. A letter from the Irish synod. No. 4. A memorial from the congregation of Brush Creek.

Synod adjourned by prayer, to meet at 2 o'clock P. M.

*Same place, 6th Oct. 2 o'clock P. M.*

Synod met and was constituted by prayer. All the members present, the minutes were read. The moderator appointed the Standing Committees. 1. On unfinished business, Walkingshaw, Roney and D. Wallace. 2. On discipline, Steele, Roberts and Gemmil. 3. Signs of the times, J. M. Willson, R. Wallace and Kirk. 4. Synodical reports, Blackwood, Milligan and Bowden. 5. Foreign correspondence, Dr. Willson, Roney and Faris. 6. Finance, J. Wallace, Wright and Mitchell. 7. Theological Seminary, Crozier, Johnston and Sproul.

No. 1. Letter from the Scottish Synod, was read and referred to the committee on Foreign correspondence.

No. 2. Containing papers A. B. and C. from Vermont on Anti-slavery Societies, was taken up ; paper A. was read. B. and C. were referred to a special committee to report on the propriety of their being read. Steele, R. Wallace, and D. Wallace are that committee. Resolved that part A. be laid on the table for the present.

No. 3. Letter from the Irish Synod with an accompanying document was read and referred to the committee on Foreign correspondence.

No. 4. Memorial from the Brush Creek congregation was read and referred to the following special committee: Milligan, Sproul, and Gemmil.

Andrew Bowden was added to the committee on the theological seminary.

Resolved, that synod adjourn daily at half past 12, and 5 o'clock P. M.

Synod adjourned by prayer, till 9 o'clock A. M. tomorrow.

*Same place, 7th Oct. 9 o'clock A. M.*

Synod met, and was constituted by prayer. All the members present, minutes were read.

The report of the synod's treasurer was laid on the table, and marked No. 5.

The committee on papers B. and C. of No. 2, reported ; report accepted, and as amended was adopted. These papers were read. Resolved, that the petitioners in papers B. and C. have leave to



withdraw their papers, the same being intimated to them by the clerk.

Resolved, that part A. be referred to the committee to whom the memorial from Brush Creek was referred.

Resolved that Mr. Lusk be added to the committee on the signs of the times.

The committee on unfinished business reported ; report accepted, and laid on the table for the present.

Synod adjourned by prayer, till 2 o'clock P. M.

*Same place, 2 o'clock P. M.*

Synod met, and was constituted by prayer. All the members present, minutes were read.

Resolved, that the report on unfinished business be now taken up ; and that it be considered article by article. On the first article, namely, collections for superannuated ministers, it was ascertained that congregations, generally, had attended to it, but as it had been neglected by some congregations, synod resolved that the sessions of congregations severally be enjoined to attend to this punctually for the future. On the 3d article, namely, synod's order to congregations to make collections for the republication of the testimony, it was found that many of the congregations had made and remitted collections, and that others had not.

Resolved, that the hearing of Mr. Roney's argument on the Arminian Controversy be made the order of the day for to-morrow morning.

The eastern subordinate synod reported ; report accepted, and referred to the committee on synodical reports. The following are extracts.

"Since the last session of general synod, the meetings of the presbyteries under our care have been harmonious, and have transacted much business of considerable local interest. Two new congregations have been organized, one in Rochester, the other, the united societies of Galway, Broadalbin and Pricetown. Both of these congregations have obtained grants of the moderations of calls, in the hopes of having pastors settled over them. Mr. James M. Willson was ordained to the pastoral charge of the congregation of Philadelphia, on the 27th November, 1834. The Rev. Wm. L. Roberts was installed pastor of the Baltimore congregation, Jan. 15th, 1835, and the Rev. David Scott as pastor of the Albany congregation, June 7th, 1836. In the bounds of the northern presbytery, the Topsham and Argyle congregations are still vacant, the former able to support a minister. Besides the congregations referred to above, there are under the care of the southern presbytery, vacant and ripe for settlement, the united congregations of Kortright and Bovina, the congregations of Canecochigue, and of Sterling. We have but one licentiate, Mr. Francis Gailey, who has been laboring within our bounds since last sessions of general synod. The Rev.



Charles McKee was received a member of the southern presbytery on certificate from the Ohio presbytery, and has labored within its bounds for about a year, chiefly in the city of Rochester.

There are under the care of the southern presbytery, Mr. Joseph J. Atchison, and Mr. James M. Beattie, students of theology; the former in his third, and the latter in his second year of study; and under the care of the northern presbytery, Mr. Robert Trumbull in his third year. We believe that the increase of our numbers, within the last four years, has filled up the number of all that were drawn away by the late defections. Many who in some degree wavered, have been confirmed, and others have been reclaimed.

It is with pain we refer to the condition of society around us. Idolatry, infidelity, heresy, error and gross immorality, are greatly on the increase, and though the judgments of God have smitten the land over the whole extent of the Atlantic States, in various forms, as yet they appear not to have been regarded by the great mass of the people, who harden their hearts, and become more and more impenitent. By the late severe trial, through which we have passed, we trust the Head of the Church has been preparing us, to resist, in his saving strength, the increasing violence of the temptations to which we are exposed."

The western subordinate synod reported; report accepted and referred to the committee on synodical reports. The following are extracts.

"We have had two meetings since our last report to your Rev. body. Great peace and harmony prevailed. The congregations under our care, both settled and vacant, are generally, in a healthful and flourishing condition; and by the Divine blessing accompanying our exertions, the cause of God's covenant is still progressing. Our ministerial labors are great, and have lately been increased by the death of our much beloved brother, Rev. John Cannon, who departed this life, Feb. 2d, 1836. To us, this dispensation of God's holy and adorable providence is deeply afflictive; yet we would desire to be resigned to his blessed will. Had it been left to us, we would no doubt have said that it was more needful that he should abide with us; but no! he had fought the good fight, he had finished his course, and now rests from all his labors, and his works shall follow him. They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.

While we mourn the loss of our esteemed father, we would not be unmindful of the loving kindness of the Lord. On the 15th April, 1835, Mr. Hugh Walkingshaw, licentiate under the care of the Pittsburgh presbytery, and Mr. Samuel McKinney, licentiate under the care of the Ohio presbytery, were by their respective presbyteries, ordained to the office of the holy ministry. The former was settled pastor of the united congregations of Union, Puckety, Brookland, &c. The latter was sent to labor in the congregation of Elk-



horn, Washington county, Ill., whence he received a call, and where he has since been installed.

Mr. Armour McFarland, a licentiate under the care of the Ohio presbytery, has accepted a call from the congregation of Utica, and his ordination is designed so soon as time and circumstances will admit.

The case of the Rev. Robert Lusk has been happily issued, and he is restored to the exercise of his office.

Rev. Messrs. Cooper and G. McMillan, having been called on by the Ohio presbytery, refused to submit to your authority, and their names were stricken from the roll.

The name of Rev. J. Gill, who was reported to you at your last meeting as having been restored by the Pittsburgh presbytery, has also been stricken from the roll. He has again proved recreant to the reformation cause, and returned to the flock of his former companions.

We have four students of theology, viz :—James Love, of the first year, and Hugh Stevenson, received Oct. 1836, under the care of the Pittsburgh presbytery. James Wallace of the second year, and John Johnston McCluskin, received Oct. 1836, under the care of the Ohio presbytery. We have within our bounds a goodly number of hopeful and promising youth, who are engaged in literary pursuits. We trust the Lord is about to send many able and faithful laborers into his harvest.

We have two unsettled ministers ; Robert Lusk and John Wallace ; and two licentiates, A. McFarland and J. Holmes, laboring within our bounds ; but they are unable to supply the pressing demand for gospel ordinances. We pray you to give us all the ministerial aid in your power. Our vacancies are numerous and increasing. Several of them are ready for settlement, and some of our congregations so large as to require division. Thus you see that the Lord has not forgotten our portion of Zion.

For the information and satisfaction of the brethren in Europe, our synod has sent them an official letter, touching the grounds of dispute between us and our former brethren who have gone out from us."

Resolved, that the western subordinate synod be requested to favor this court with a hearing of the letter sent by them to the synods in Scotland and Ireland, and alluded to by them, in their report. The letter being read, it was resolved that the western subordinate synod be requested to favor this court with it, as an accompanying document to their report ; and is as follows :

"To the Rev. Moderator and other members of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod of Scotland, to meet the third Monday of April 1836, in the city of Glasgow.

At a meeting of the Western Subordinate Synod of the reformed presbyterian church, in North America, held at Salt-creek, Muskingum county, Ohio, October 14th, 1835, it was unainmously agreed,



that a committee be appointed to write a letter to each of the reformed presbyterian synods in Europe. That committee consists of Rev. Messrs. Robert Wallace, John Cannon, Wm. Sloane, and James Blackwood. Being convened according to appointment, we now enter upon the important work assigned us.

*Dear Fathers and Brethren:*

It seems necessary to offer a few reasons why we as a subordinate synod, address you on a subject which concerns the whole church in our land. You are aware that our general synod, in August, 1831, agreed that eastern and western subordinate synods be constituted to meet the exigencies of our church, scattered over a vast extent of territory. We providentially having seen your last synodical minutes, and observed that you do not give a final decision in relation to the controversy and division, which have unhappily taken place, in the reformed presbyterian church, in these United States owing to "the very conflicting statements" which you had received: We feel bound by a sense of duty to ourselves—to you—and to the whole church, to give you such a statement of facts, as may enable you intelligently to give us your countenance and approbation, in an exertion to maintain the testimony of Jesus.

The ministers composing the western subordinate synod, were *almost* as little concerned in the movements of the pro re nata of November, 1832, or, the eastern subordinate synod of April following, as you, dear brethren on the other side of the Atlantic; hence we consider ourselves, in *some respects*, the better prepared for giving the required information respecting the points of difference. Next to the enjoyment of fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, we think all saints will desire to have fellowship with each other. It is therefore our hearts desire and prayer to God, that with *one mind*, and with *one mouth*, we may glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, with you, our Scottish brethren. A desire to promote this great object, is what now prompts us to write.

Happy are we to observe, that in relation to the great subject of controversy, viz. the American government, you need no information. On this, you and we are one. The printed letter, which our former brethren transmitted to you, prevents our wondering that you could not give a final decision in our case. Of its very existence though bearing date December 1833, most of us were entirely ignorant, until about four months ago it came into our hands. Had its pages been seen, or contents known, by any of us previous to the last general synod, doubtless you would have had from that court an exposure of the misstatements with which it abounds. The very fact of its concealment seems to characterize it as belonging to that class of deeds which cannot bear the light.

It is beyond a doubt, that the schism in our church, was produced by a *derelection* of principle, on the part of our former brethren, which they had solemnly engaged to maintain; and in endeavoring to cover their defection, they violated presbyterial order. This will be



evinced by comparing Dr. Wylie's "sons of oil" and "sermon on covenanting," with the "original pastoral address;" and Dr. McMaster's duty of nations," with his "four letters;" and comparing all with our Testimony. The settled policy of our church has ever been to prohibit her members from incorporating with the civil institutions of the land. We admit that attempts have been made *by some* to conceal their aberrations from the laws and practice of the church by *preventing* a synodic act, referring to local adjudication. These perversions have produced all the disorders detailed in our official, and other documents; and have terminated in the abandonment of the distinctive principles of our church.

For a number of years before the unhappy division, a spirit of neutrality seemed to be fast gaining ground among us. Those who loved the principles of our covenanted reformation, perceived and deplored it; and had alarming forebodings of what has actually taken place. Dr. Willson's overture of 1830, which our former brethren have mentioned in their letter to you, was intended to *stem* that torrent, which threatened the church's safety. The adoption of *this overture* was prevented, *by management*,—notwithstanding its acknowledged merit by all as a clear exhibition of the *established practice* of our church, in relation to the American government. None *dared, at that time*, to bring the charge of new-light against it. Next meeting of general synod (1831) the *act of free discussion* was passed,—granting to all, the liberty of publishing their views on the subject of civil relations, in the American Christian Expositor. It was distinctly expressed; and understood, that every communication on this subject, should be *subscribed by the writer*, that *he*, and not the *editor*, might bear the responsibility. By a disregard of the *conditions* of this act, it was perverted, to minister to the cause of error and defection. Using it as a pretext, the *innovators* immediately commenced a more open and formal attack on the distinctive *principles* of the church. The pulpit and press, were both employed, in this work of disorganization. In some instances, *even the practice* of the church was trampled on, by members, transgressing *her* laws, respecting *voting, setting on juries, &c.* By a suspension of her salutary discipline, *these* were too often suffered to pass with impunity. Thus you see, brethren, the rise and progress of that defection, which led to a final rupture.

You will bear with us, while we briefly advert to a few of the more important movements, of the eastern section of our church. The publication of the rejected paragraphs of the pastoral address, by the minority of the eastern subordinate synod, was a measure that every friend of truth and peace, must deplore. This was *the brand* which kindled the devouring flame in our Zion. The only pretext, by which the advocates of this measure attempt to justify it, is the act of free discussion already referred to. The effects of this publication, on the church, were most baneful. Those who were impatient of the restraints of *our standards*, availed themselves of the high authority of



the author, and approvers, of that document, in justification of not only *free discussions*, but *free actings*. The contagion spread with alarming rapidity. In our own hitherto peaceful region, professed covenanters began to *advocate*, and to *act* on the principles, contained in the rejected paragraphs. Along with the popularity of these principles, the plausibility with which it was urged, that they were countenanced by general synod's act of free discussion, and also, the silence of the inferior judicatories, gave them greater extension, and their advocates greater confidence.

It was, at this crisis, that the eastern subordinate synod felt itself constrained to do something to check the spreading evil. They had exercised forbearance, from April, 1832, when the intention of publishing the above referred to document was made known,—till November the same year. The friends of "Reformation principles," and practices, were convinced that something must be done. Church discipline must be exercised. To call the offenders to account, was competent only to the eastern subordinate synod. Against that court the offence had been committed. Its authority had been disregarded by some of its members. Besides, all the members of the Philadelphia Presbytery belonged to that minority which had published the offensive document. It was not to be expected that these men would exercise discipline on themselves. To the eastern subordinate synod at its next meeting, they must necessarily render account. That meeting would not take place till the following April. To that meeting the case might have been left, had contempt of court been the only thing with which they were charged. But when it is considered that their published sentiments were pervading every part of the church, and shaking it to the very centre; and that it gave currency to those sentiments, that the authors of them went with impunity; prompt measures on the part of those to whom belonged *the right*, and on whom devolved *the duty* of calling them to account, were indispensable. Here was an important matter, requiring the interference of synod, occurring *de novo*; for the address was not published till the court had adjourned. For such exigencies provision is made in pro-re-nata meetings of courts.

Two presbyteries united in requesting the moderator of subordinate synod to call a meeting pro-re-nata. The moderator complied, and addressed his circular to the members. The offending brethren refused to attend, and sent their protests. The clerk was present; and when asked for synod's papers, replied by an insolent and contemptuous refusal. He was thrice cited to answer for the charge of *contempt* and *disobedience*. Persisting in this rebellious course he was suspended from the exercise of the ministerial office. What court of Christ could have done otherwise?

The other offenders, not being present, were *libelled*, and referred to the stated meeting of the court for trial. The above, dear brethren, *are some* of the considerations which we think justified the calling of the pro-re-nata meeting of synod. We believe that the bles-



sing of the Lord of Zion rested on that meeting. That the good designed, by those who called it, was realized, we can from observation, bear witness. We saw, with thankfulness, the energies of the innovators paralyzed. The spread of their sentiments was greatly checked.

The meeting of the eastern subordinate synod, in the following April, was one of great importance. To it, we of the west, looked ardently, desiring something done, that would promote the interests of truth and peace. But how were we disappointed when we heard of the disorderly and rebellious course resorted to by some of the members. Of the proceedings of that court you are doubtless well ascertained. That was the time when, the minority who had offended at a former meeting, being unable to carry their point and escape the censures of the church, left the court on the *second day* of its sessions. Here was perfected the schism that appeared in its incipient stage at the former meeting. The synod cited them to return and answer to the charges *tabled* against them. They refused to return, adding to their former offences contumacy. There was ample evidence that the charges contained in the libel were true. They were found guilty, and suspended from the exercise of the office of the holy ministry.

On the ground of *expediency*, much could be said, why the court should not have proceeded to suspend these ministers. One of the accused, was the moderator of general synod; and the fact of his suspension, it was foreseen would embarrass the court at its meeting. Still expediency must never interfere with obvious duty. The court was convinced that the charges in the libel were fully proved, and of course, faithfulness demanded the prompt exercise of discipline. To their *first offences*, they added contempt of court, in *refusing* to attend its pro-re-nata meeting; and crowned all with schism and contumacy, at its *stated meeting*. It would not be easy, to conceive of a case that more imperiously required the infliction of church censures. Into these matters, we cannot now minutely enter. For more copious information we would refer you to a pamphlet entitled "statement of some recent transactions in the southern reformed presbytery, by several ministers," &c. and also to the "narrative of recent occurrences within the bounds of the eastern subordinate synod," by Rev. R. Gibson. We would only add on this point, that subsequent occurrences, have not convinced us that the suspensions were undeserved.

We have intimated that it was foreseen that the suspension of the moderator of general synod, would embarrass that court at its meeting. We of the west felt this embarrassment with all its weight. Now; for the first time, duty called us, to enter the arena of ecclesiastical strife. Our affections were not slumbering. We dreaded a division of our beloved Zion. We dreaded worse, the overthrow of the fair fabric of reformation. We wished to maintain the unity of the church, and yet to hold our distinctive principles. We earnestly



desired to have these vexatious matters permanently settled; and the spirit of innovation effectually arrested. We hoped to accomplish this in general synod. A *large majority* of the *delegates* from the presbyteries composing the western subordinate synod, were *known* to be firm in the faith. This majority was not obtained by improper means, as has been insinuated to you. In compliance with the recommendation of the western subordinate synod, young men were ordained to the holy ministry, to be employed as missionaries, *one* by the Ohio, and *two* by the Pittsburgh presbytery. It was on the occasion of the ordination, by the Pittsburgh presbytery, that a spirit of insubordination was manifested, and a disposition to co-operate with the eastern innovators indicated. The presbytery consisted of nine ministers and *nine* ruling elders. Of these, three ministers and two ruling elders opposed the ordination; and with the exception of *one* of the ruling elders, protested against the division of the court to ordain. We are the more explicit on this subject, because of a statement in the printed letter of our former brethren, which is contrary to the matter of fact. It is to this amount. "These two young men were ordained—contrary to the protest of ministers of the ordaining presbytery, and by a majority of ruling elders."

We would now turn your attention to that most important and eventful period, in our ecclesiastical history—the meeting of general synod in Philadelphia, in August, 1833. On the day previous to *that meeting*, many of the western delegates being forward, *held a conference* to devise what course was best to pursue, in our perplexing situation. In that conference, Dr. Black, (who was clerk of general synod) presided. As a pacific measure, it was proposed to employ a western minister to constitute the court as moderator. This, it was fondly hoped, would be acceded to. Against a western member there could be no objection. This measure was most strenuously opposed by all the "new-light" members present, who were, with a firmness worthy a better cause, not to be moved. The chairman declared that rather than permit any other to constitute general synod—he would suffer his arm to be cut off from his shoulder. And farther, that as *he* and *Mr. Crawford* were the only members of general synod, known as such, until the certificates were examined, they would reject the certificates of every pro re nata man—admit those from Philadelphia presbytery, and dispose of others as they might see proper. Thus were the hopes of pacification frustrated. As friends of order we could not agree to have the court constituted by Mr. Crawford. The fact of his suspension by the eastern subordinate synod was made known in the published minutes of that court. The knowledge of his suspension, by a court competent to take cognizance of him, was all that was necessary to warrant us in refusing to sustain him as moderator of general synod. We offer no argument to prove that suspension disqualifies for acting, either as an officer, or a member of any court. This, we think, is self evident. We were officially informed that the moderator was suspended. We knew



we had no right to judge of the righteousness of that act of suspension—until in a court by which the whole matter could be cognosed, such a court was the general synod. But the question presented itself, by whom shall the court be constituted? The moderator was disqualified. An alternate had been appointed. One of the contingencies for which he was appointed had taken place. To him we now looked as the one on whom the duty of constituting the court devolved. There was no legal bar in his way. But those of the east, who had made the schism, and those of the west, who joined with them, were inexorable. They required us to prejudge the case, and individually nullify the act of suspension. This we could not do. And yet, this would have been the constructive language of our conduct, had we consented to permit a suspended minister to constitute the court.

In this trying situation, we felt it our duty and privilege to make special application to Zion's King for direction. The day on the evening of which general synod was constituted, we, and our Eastern brethren *spent* in fasting, humiliation, prayer, and other religious exercises. We trust that our prayers, and the prayers of many of the congregations of the Lord's people in our land, *who*, we afterwards ascertained, spent that day in similar exercises with ourselves, were heard and answered.

The hour of meeting having arrived, it was evident that a suspended minister would be thrust on the court as its moderator. That another warning might be given, and the very forms of *order* observed, when he rose to commence public worship, the clerk of the Eastern subordinate synod announced that he was under suspension. The alternate moderator made it known publicly, that the court would be constituted in another place. To that place all the members who were endeavoring to maintain our principles, orderly retired, and the court was constituted, and proceeded to transact its appropriate business.

This, fathers and brethren, is a brief, unvarnished history of the principal matters connected with our unhappy division. You will now judge whether or not, alleged disorder, was that which separated us. As proof, that *not this*, but *diversity of principle* was the cause, you will notice this fact; those who were already known to embrace the "new views," ranked themselves with the suspended men. On the other hand, those who held fast by the principles of our testimony, sustained the proceedings of the Eastern subordinate synod. We deplore the breach, and would rejoice in a reunion, on the principles of reformation. For these principles, we have been struggling. On looking back, we cannot see any of our ecclesiastical proceedings, that could have been dispensed with, without injuring the covenanted cause.

Although the church, on our hand, has been weakened by the secession, yet, we are not left without encouragement. The great body of our people remain steadfast; and many of those who were



drawn aside by the influence of the principal instruments in the defection, have returned. In our own bounds, the prospects are flattering. The ministers belonging to our subordinate synod are fourteen in number. Two of these are at present without pastoral charge. We have two probationers, and one student of theology; besides a number of young men pursuing preparatory studies. We desire to be thankful that God has enabled us, in some measure, to be faithful, in maintaining the testimony of Christ, in the face of reproach and opposition. We would feel grateful should you notice this communication in your correspondence with our general synod, and still *more* could you condescend to address a letter immediately to ourselves. Our court meets in the city of Pittsburgh on the first Tuesday of October, 1836. Our moderator is Rev. Thomas Sproul, of said city.

Dear fathers and brethren- that the Great Shepherd of the flock may protect you from all danger, and grant you success in the great work in which you are engaged, is the earnest and fervent prayer of your brethren and fellow witnesses for the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Signed in behalf of Western subordinate synod's committee, by  
**ROBERT WALLACE, Chairman."**

*Greenfield, Ohio, December 15th, 1835.*

Resolved, that the report of synod's treasurer be taken up. Referred to the committee on finance.

Resolved, that a committee be appointed to superintend the publication of the minutes, and to ascertain whether they can be published during the sessions of synod, and what the expense will be. Steele, Sproul and Scott are that committee.

Synod adjourned by prayer, till to-morrow 9 o'clock A. M.

*Same place, 8th Oct. 9 o'clock A. M.*

Synod met and was constituted by prayer. All the members present. minutes were read.

The committee on the Brush Creek memorial reported; report accepted, and for the present laid on the table.

The argument on the Arminian controversy being the order of the day, Mr. Roney was called upon to read it; it was read, accepted, and referred to the following special committee, Lusk, Roberts and Bowden.

Synod adjourned by prayer, till Monday half past 12 o'clock.

*Same place, 10th Oct. half past 12 o'clock.*

Synod met, and was constituted by prayer, by Mr. Milligan, the senior minister present, the moderator being absent on account of sickness. All the members present, except Messrs. S. M. Willson and J. M. Willson, both absent by sickness, and Johnston, Roberts, Wright and Kirk, minutes were read.

Johnston, Roberts and Kirk took their seats.



The committee to whom was referred the argument on the Arminian controversy reported in favor of its publication in overture ; report accepted and adopted. The committee on the publication of the minutes reported, and the committee were dismissed. The report of the committee on the Brush Creek memorial was called up.

Resolved, that this report be recommitted to the committee, with instructions to new model the 7th article. The committee on fellowship rules reported ; report accepted, and recommitted to the committee.

Resolved, that the Rev. C. B. McKee, formerly appointed to prepare an argument on the Hopkinsion errors, be enjoined, to have the same in readiness before the next meeting of synod ; and that the same be intimated to Mr. McKee by the clerk. The committee on fellowship rules again reported, recommending the acceptance and publication of "Guide to private social worship," in overture.

Resolved, that this synod recommend the republication of "Guide to private social worship," by any person who may undertake the responsibility.

Resolved, that members of synod meet for devotional services this evening at 7 o'clock.

Synod adjourned by prayer till to-morrow at 9 o'clock A. M.

*Same place, 11th Oct. 9 o'clock A. M.*

Synod met and was constituted by prayer, by Mr. Milligan, the moderator being still indisposed. All the other members present, except J. M. Willson, who is prevented by sickness from attending, minutes were read.

Resolved, that Mr. Steele be moderator, pro tempore.

The committee on the Brush Creek memorial again reported ; report accepted, taken up and considered paragraph by paragraph for adoption. During the discussion, synod adjourned by prayer till 2 o'clock P. M.

*Same place, 2 o'clock, P. M.*

Synod met and was constituted by prayer. All the members present except S. M. Willson and J. M. Willson still prevented from attending by indisposition. Minutes were read.

The consideration of the report on the Brush Creek memorial was resumed. A member of court having been called to supplicate the throne of grace, the report as amended was adopted. The moderator pro tempore, and Andrew Bowden requested that their dissent from the 7th resolution of the report be entered on the minutes.—The report is as follows:

"Your committee on the papers from Vermont and Ohio, have taken into consideration the subjects referred to in them, and convinced that it is the duty of the church to exhibit her testimony in the clearest light against the sin of slavery ; and to avoid giving occasion to the charge of having any connexion with those who coun-



tenance the cause of oppression, would therefore recommend for your adoption the following preamble and resolutions:

Whereas this court did, at its sessions in 1828, pass certain resolutions approving the plans of the American colonization society, and recommending it to the members of this church for their conscientious support, at the same time distinctly specifying that the emancipation of slaves as maintained by the testimony and practice of this church, be accompanied in all cases, not contrary to the will of the emancipated, with removal from the U. S., to such place or places as the emancipated shall choose." And whereas the American colonization society, in the practical developement of its plans, has manifested a total disregard of these principles on which it received the approbation of this court. This court never did give its approbation to the colonization society considered as opposed to manumission; on the contrary, it was on the supposition that it would be favorable to abolition that we gave it our countenance. We have always considered slavery to be an atrocious sin, an outrageous robbery of man from himself and from his Maker; as much more wicked than common robbery as liberty is more valuable than property; surely continuance in iniquity cannot make iniquity become justice, no legal investiture can make *wrong* to be *right*, neither can the sin of slavery justify the sin of banishing the sufferers; nor can we conceive of any thing more injudicious than to transport the heathen of our land to evangelize them on the African shore. Therefore, resolved.

1. That as this synod has always borne explicit testimony against the heaven daring sin of slavery, and lifted their warning voice against its awfully dangerous consequences, so they continue to do.

2. That this synod continues to maintain the duty and safety of the immediate and universal emancipation of the enslaved, and they view with satisfaction and interest, the augmentation of numbers, and the increase of zeal among the friends of the abolition of slavery in our land.

3. That the colonization society, in making expatriation a condition of emancipation, in fostering and not suppressing prejudice against the colored man, in extorting the consent of the enslaved to banishment as if "*by a cart whip*," does not merit, but has forfeited the patronage of the christian community, and cannot have the approbation of the reformed presbyterian church.

4. That however pure may be the motives of colonizationists and benevolent in their operations, for the good of the colored man, an insuperable objection lies against the system, viz. that he never desired their aid in this way; the colored population of this country always shuddered at the idea of transportation to Africa, where the language of the people is to them barbarous, and the clime insalubrious; they have the innate attachment of mankind to the place of their nativity and the peculiar horror at removal which is necessarily attached to those who have never read nor travelled; besides, it is plain that some of them viewed from the first the plan of colonization with a suspicious



eye as designed to weaken the nature and remove the mind and muscles of free blacks, so that they could in no way minister to the removal of the heavy yoke that galled the shoulders of their brethren. In fine they viewed and still view more and more the transportation ship with horror, inferior only to the slave market, and the African shore with dread reluctance only inferior to the rice plantation in Arkansas or Texas.

5. That it is the duty of the christian church to open her mouth for the dumb, oppressed slave, and to plead the cause of those who are by the cupidity of men under the sanction of iniquitous laws appointed to destruction, to remember those that are in bonds, as bound with them, and to employ all the talents given to her members and ministers in the cause of liberty, that the oppressed may be set free, and every yoke of iniquity be broken.

6. That it is the duty of the christian community to stand up for the principles of truth, and the cause of righteousness in the face of all the violence which ungodly men exercise and threaten. If the advocates of abolition be beaten from the arena of their contest, these men of blood, will, in all probability attack the reformed presbyterian church, which has in fact always been an abolition society. Indeed, the church, long before the reformation, emancipated slaves in Europe, for we find the acts of manumission were generally in this form. "*No temore Die and pro amore Christi*," for the fear of God and the love of Christ, we emancipate. Shall the reformed presbyterian church be less explicit now, in this advanced period of her testimony, and in republican America, where the humane and the righteous of other denominations are stepping out like martyrs to suffer reproach, and are taking willingly the spoiling of their goods, and even exposing their lives on the high places of this glorious advocacy.

7. That, in compliance with the memorial of the petitioners of Adams county, in accordance with the principles of our church, and the sentiments of our own hearts, we withdraw the approbation given to the colonization society, and transfer our approbation and patronage to the cause of abolition.

8. That, it is the duty of covenanters not only to encourage the operations of the benevolent for the relief of the oppressed, but also to avail themselves of the opening which these afford for disseminating the principles of our church, especially for vindicating the paramount authority of the divine law in regard to social relations and actions.

In regard to this too, we ought to be thankful and take courage that this sentiment becomes more and more prevalent among abolitionists. In one of the addresses published by the Ohio A. S. on the duty of the churches, this sentiment is set forth. "It is vain to say that slavery is a political evil, that ministers should not interfere with politicks. Will such an excuse avail at the bar of God when the judgment shall sit? The gospel ministry are sent to be the light of the world. The Saviour says they are the light of



the world. Who but the ministers of Christ are to enlighten civil government? *The sacred scriptures are the standard of morals for government as well as for individuals.* Should not the covenanters who have labored so long and suffered so much for this principle, rejoice that men of talent, moral worth and influence are helping us to propagate that great truth which is the seed-bud of all our peculiarities as a professing people, and which must be laid at the foundation of the millennial temple.

Resolved, that the report of the committee appointed to prepare a revised draught of the book of discipline, and a draught of a book of church government, with forms of procedure appended, be made the order of the day for to-morrow morning. The committee on the theological seminary reported; report accepted, and the consideration of it is made the order of the day for to-morrow afternoon. The committee for publishing the minutes and overtures of last meeting of synod reported; report accepted and laid on the table. The following is the substance of the report.

Proceeds of minutes,	\$135,56
Expense of printing, &c.	80,75

Balance remaining to be paid into the hands of synod's treasurer,	\$54,81
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Resolved, that inferior judicatories be enjoined to report on the arguments on the jury act, and the magistrates power circa sacra, published in overture, and on the argument on the Arminian controversy to be published in overture, with the minutes of this meeting of synod.

Rev. R. Gibson was appointed to write a piece on popery as an argument, for the argumentative part of the testimony. Dr. Willson was appointed to write an argument on the subject of covenanting.

Synod adjourned by prayer till tomorrow at 9 o'clock A. M.

*Same place, 12th Oct. 9 o'clock A. M.*

Synod met and was constituted by prayer. All the members present, except S. M. Willson and J. M. Willson, still indisposed, and Milligan, Gemmil and Wright, minutes were read. Milligan, Gemmil and Wright took their seats. The committee on synodical reports, reported; report accepted and laid on the table.

The order of the day, namely, reading the revised draught of a book of discipline, &c. was called for. The draught of a book of government was read, accepted, and referred to the following committee. Lusk, Roney and Wright. The revised draught of a book of discipline was read, accepted, and referred to the following committee. Milligan, Johnston and Bowden.

Synod adjourned by prayer till 2 o'clock P. M.

*Same place, 2 o'clock P. M.*

Synod met and was constituted by prayer. All the members



present, except S. M. Willson and J. M. Willson, still indisposed, and Dr. Willson and Roney, who were attending these sick members, minutes were read.

The committee to whom was referred the draught of a book of discipline reported ; report accepted. The order of the day, namely, the report of the committee on the theological seminary was called for. A motion for its adoption was negatived. Mr. Roney took his seat. Mr. Milligan is appointed to write a letter of condolence to the relict of the late Rev. J. Cannon.

Resolved, That the establishment of a theological seminary be decreed, and that a committee be appointed to report during this meeting of synod, a plan for carrying it into effect : Roney, J. Wallace, ministers, and Faris, ruling elder, are that committee.

The report of the committee on the book of discipline, recommending its publication in overture, was taken up, considered article by article, and adopted as amended.

Mr. Sproul was added to the committee on the theological seminary.

Synod adjourned by prayer; till to-morrow at 8 o'clock, A. M.

*Same place, 13th Oct. 8 o'clock A. M.*

Synod met and was constituted by prayer. All the members present, except those indisposed, minutes were read.

The committee on finance reported ; the report is accepted and adopted. The following is an extract.

“Your committee have examined the report of the synod's treasurer, and find it correct ; and they have received for defraying the expenses of ministers and ruling elders to this synod from the congregations of

Philadelphia,	\$48,	Salt Creek,	\$11,75
Baltimore,	20,	Union Puckety,	17,50
Canecochigue,	8,	Brush Creek,	2,45
Craftsbury,	10,	Bloomington,	16,
Beaver,	13,50	Newburgh,	23,25
Albany,	15,	New York 1st cong.	29,
Pittsburgh,	20,	New York 2d cong.	25,07
Beechwoods,	8,	Monongahela,	20,
New Alexandria,	16,	Ryegate,	15,
Miami,	5,	Greenfield,	4,
Coldenham,	10,		

The committee to whom was referred the book of government reported, recommending its publication in overture ; report accepted and adopted. The committee on the theological seminary reported ; report accepted and adopted as amended. The following are extracts.

“1. That synod after uniting in an address to the throne of grace for direction, elect by ballot a professor of Theology.

2. That the location of the seminary be within the bounds of the



congregation of New Alexandria, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.

3. That the professor elected shall not be required, for the present, to reside, or attend to his professional duties, at the place fixed for the location of the seminary."

"That the course of studies prescribed by synod at its sessions in 1834, be for substance pursued by students attending the seminary."

Resolved, that the carrying out of the preceding report be the order of the day for this afternoon. Mr. Milligan reported the draught of a letter to be sent to Mrs. Cannon, which was adopted, and is as follows.

*"Alleghenytown, 12th Oct. 1836.*

DEAR MADAM,—The synod of the reformed presbyterian church, through the great respect they had for your deceased husband, write you this letter of sincere condolence. We have comfortable evidence to believe that you have been sustained, and that you will be sustained by our Divine Master. You can now claim our Lord in a peculiar manner as your Husband, and we trust that while you look at, and address, with peculiar tenderness your fatherless children, that you will tell them of the gracious condescension of our covenant God to fatherless children. Dear sister, for you are the relict of our deceased brother, you have a great responsibility in regard to the education of that interesting family of which you are now the sole surviving parent. Be not discouraged; you have lost a valuable head, but it has often been the case that children, even boys, left as yours are, have been more influenced by the tender tears of a widowed mother than they would have been, or than others are, by the sage counsels, and more stern authority of a living father. Your dear children have been dedicated to God, and God has been pleased to take them in a peculiar manner under his care, it will be your duty and your pleasure, no doubt to act under his gracious supervision and benediction in bringing them up for God. It shall be our prayer for you and them, that the principles of faith in which they have been, and we trust will be, educated, shall take a deep and sanctifying place in their hearts, that shall grow with their growth, and strengthen with their strength. We trust too, that as your husband has been taken away from the evil of very trying times in this world, that his and your children will be spared to see better times than did their father. Children in relation to public perils are like twigs and osiers; they sustain less injury from a storm than do the sturdy oaks of the forest. The Lord, we prayerfully hope, will cover you and yours under the shade of a merciful and a mighty wing, not only from personal danger, but also from the malign influence and moral contagion of a corrupt age and a very untoward generation. We need not warn you, dear lady, of the danger of much intercourse with the gay and the fashionable; but we do trust that you will be successful in guarding your family from associations with vain and light company. Strive to make your own company



and that of the godly pleasant to your very interesting family, and O! in a particular manner endeavor to shew them, both by precept and example how to walk with God. It is a matter of great thankfulness to us and you, that the first born, though yet a child, has already the intelligence and prudence of a woman; and in your oldest son there appears already much of the sagacity and engaging friendliness for which his father was meritedly so much respected. We trust you will not only enjoy much comfort from their society, but also much assistance from their activity in educating, and forming the character of the younger branches of the family. Dear lady, we do cordially commit you and them to God, who is able to build you up, and give you and them an inheritance among all them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus."

The committee on foreign correspondence reported the draught of a letter to the sister synods in Scotland and Ireland, which was accepted. The report of the committee on synodical reports, formerly accepted, was taken up, and having been considered article by article, was adopted as amended. The letter submitted by the committee on foreign correspondence was taken up, adopted, and referred to the committee for transmission to the sister synods.

Members were called upon to say how many copies of the minutes they will take and pay for, according to the standing rule of synod on this subject. The following is the result: Crozier, 20; Faris, 7; Johnston, 12; Lusk, 5; Milligan, 40; Roberts, 12; Roney, 30; Scott, 19; Steele, 20; Sproul, 60; R. Wallace, 30; J. Wallace, 20; Dr. Willson, 20; Walkingshaw, 30; Bowden, 60; Faris, (elder) 15; Gemmil, 21; Kirk, 12; Blackwood, 20.

Dr. Willson, Roney and Scott are appointed a committee for publishing the minutes of this session of synod.

Rev. Robert Wallace obtained leave of absence.

Resolved, that the draught of a book of discipline be published in overture with the minutes.

Resolved, that when this synod adjourns, it shall be, to meet on the 1st Tuesday of Oct. 1838, in the city of New York, 7 o'clock P. M.

Resolved, that the sermon at the opening of synod by the moderator, shall be from these words. "But, if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Heb. x. 38. Mr. Steele is appointed the moderator alternate.

Synod adjourned by prayer, till 2 o'clock P. M.

*Same place, 2 o'clock P. M.*

Synod met and was constituted by prayer. All the members present, except S. M. Willson and J. M. Willson, who are sick, and Rev. M. Faris and Bowden, minutes were read.

The order of the day, namely, carrying out the report of the committee on the theological seminary was called for. Faris and Bowden took their seats. A member having addressed the throne



of grace, members proceeded to vote by ballot for a professor of theology. Dr. Willson was chosen. The following are appointed superintendants of the theological seminary ; namely, Blackwood, Roney and Sproul, ministers ; Gemmil, Wylie and Bowden, ruling elders.

The following are appointed a committee to devise and report a plan for raising a permanent fund for the theological seminary ; namely, Chrystie, Crozier and Walkingshaw, ministers ; Brown, Adams and Beattie, ruling elders. Mr. Philip Mowry is appointed general agent to obtain donations in monies and books for the theological seminary.

The committee for publishing "reformation principles" reported ; report accepted. The sum of the report is, that the committee had obtained as

Proceeds of publication, with \$15 drawn from the treasury,	\$738,31
And paid as expenses of printing, &c.	565,44

Balance in favor of synod,	\$172,87
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The committee are requested to continue. The report of this committee, and the reports of the committees for publishing the minutes of 1833 and those of 1834, are referred to the committee on finance.

Owing to the indisposition of Rev. J. M. Willson, chairman of the committee on the signs of the times, Mr. Sproul is added to the committee. The committee on discipline reported "that nothing had occurred since your last meeting requiring the action of your committee ;" report accepted. An extract from the minutes of the southern presbytery was laid on the table, respecting traffic in ardent spirits, which was accepted, and referred to the following committee. Walkingshaw, Faris and Rogers.

Resolved, that a committee on the signs of the times be appointed to report at next meeting of synod. Lusk, Sproul and D. Wallace are that committee.

Resolved, that synod have a recess till half past 6 o'clock P. M.

After the recess, synod came to order. The committee on the signs of the times reported ; report accepted and adopted as amended. It is as follows.

"That the causes of fasting and thanksgiving prepared at your last meeting, apply with very little variation to the present time. The evils there enumerated still exist in some cases with increased aggravation. It is however cause of thanksgiving to see many raising the voice of rebuke against some of the prevailing sins in our day. Your committee recommend that the second Thursday of December, 1836, be observed as a day of thanksgiving ; and the first Thursday of March, 1837, as a day of fasting ; and the causes prepared at last meeting of this court be used in so far as they apply to existing circumstances."



The committee to whom was referred the extract from the minutes of the southern presbytery reported ; report accepted and adopted as amended. It is as follows.

“ That it is their decided opinion that the traffic in ardent spirits is seldom or ever carried on by any without contributing to the destruction of both the souls and bodies of their fellow men ; and do therefore accord with the Scottish and Irish synods, and submit the following resolution :

Resolved, that we recommend to our people, totally to abstain from traffic in ardent spirits.”

The committee on finance, to whom was referred the reports on the publication of “ reformation principles,” and minutes of 1833 and 1834, reported ; report accepted, and adopted as amended, of which the following are extracts :

“ Resolved, that all persons having monies on hand for minutes of 1833, be requested to forward the same to synod’s treasurer.

Resolved, that the Rev. David Scott have an order on synod’s treasurer for twenty dollars advanced by him on minutes of 1833.

Resolved, that presbyteries be enjoined to prepare a statistical account of the number of ministers and preachers of the gospel, and of the number of members within their respective bounds, and report at next meeting of synod.

Resolved, that as sabbath profanation has lately much increased, ministers be enjoined to take an early opportunity of preaching to their respective congregations on the sin and danger of this prevailing evil.

Resolved, that Mr. Philip Mowry be authorized to publish the “ Guide to private social worship,” and that the proceeds, after defraying the expenses of publication, be appropriated to the theological fund.

Dr. Willson stated to synod his acceptance of the office of professor to the theological seminary.

Synod adjourned by prayer, and singing the 133d Psalm, to meet on the 1st Tuesday of October, 1838, in the city of New York, 7 o’clock, P. M.

Attested,  
Pittsburgh, 13th, Oct. 1836.

DAVID SCOTT, *Synod Clerk.*



